

THE KANSAS CITY STAR AS A SOCIAL FORCE

BY

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

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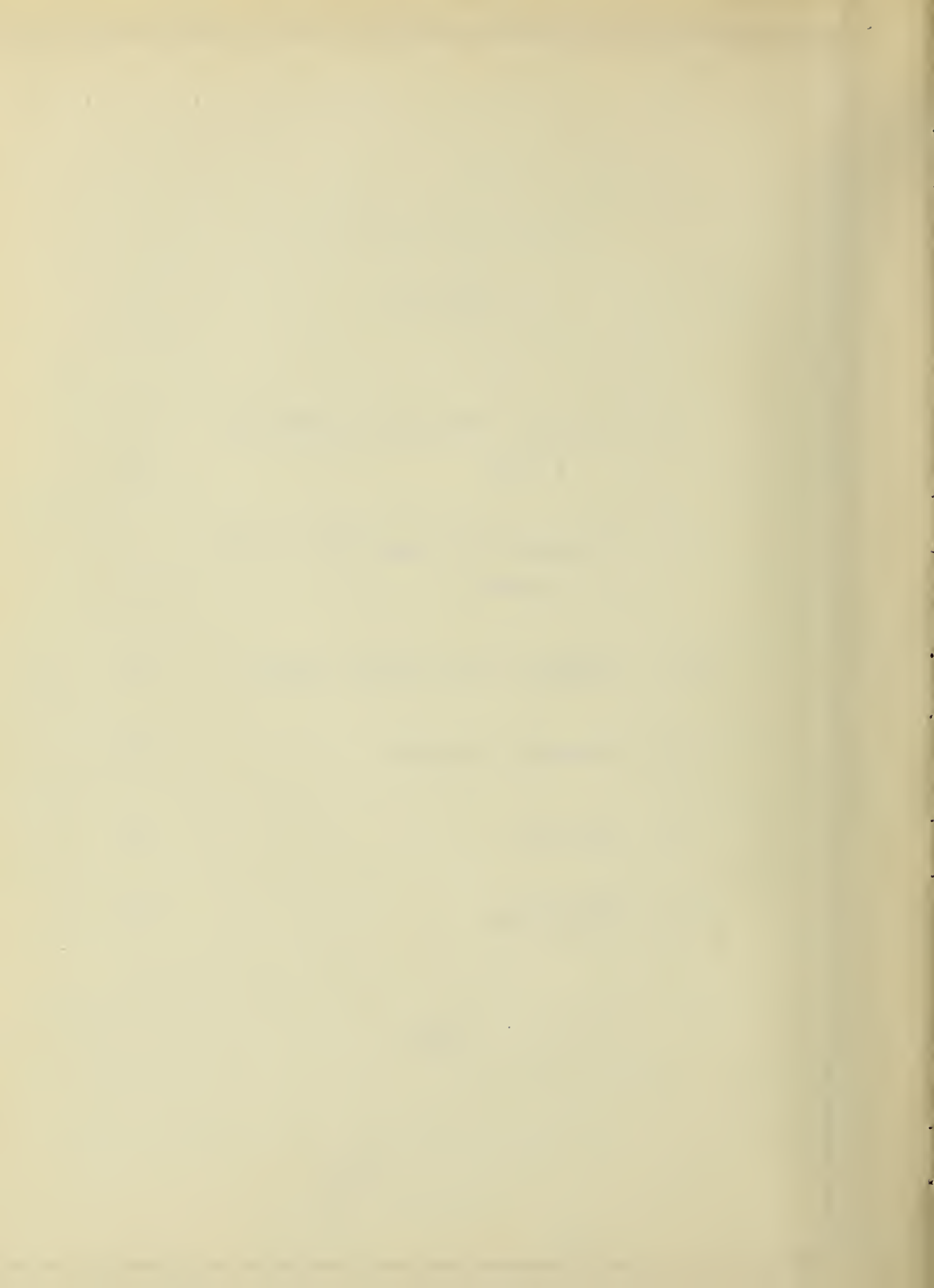
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CHAPTER I.

Founding A Newspaper and Planning A City.

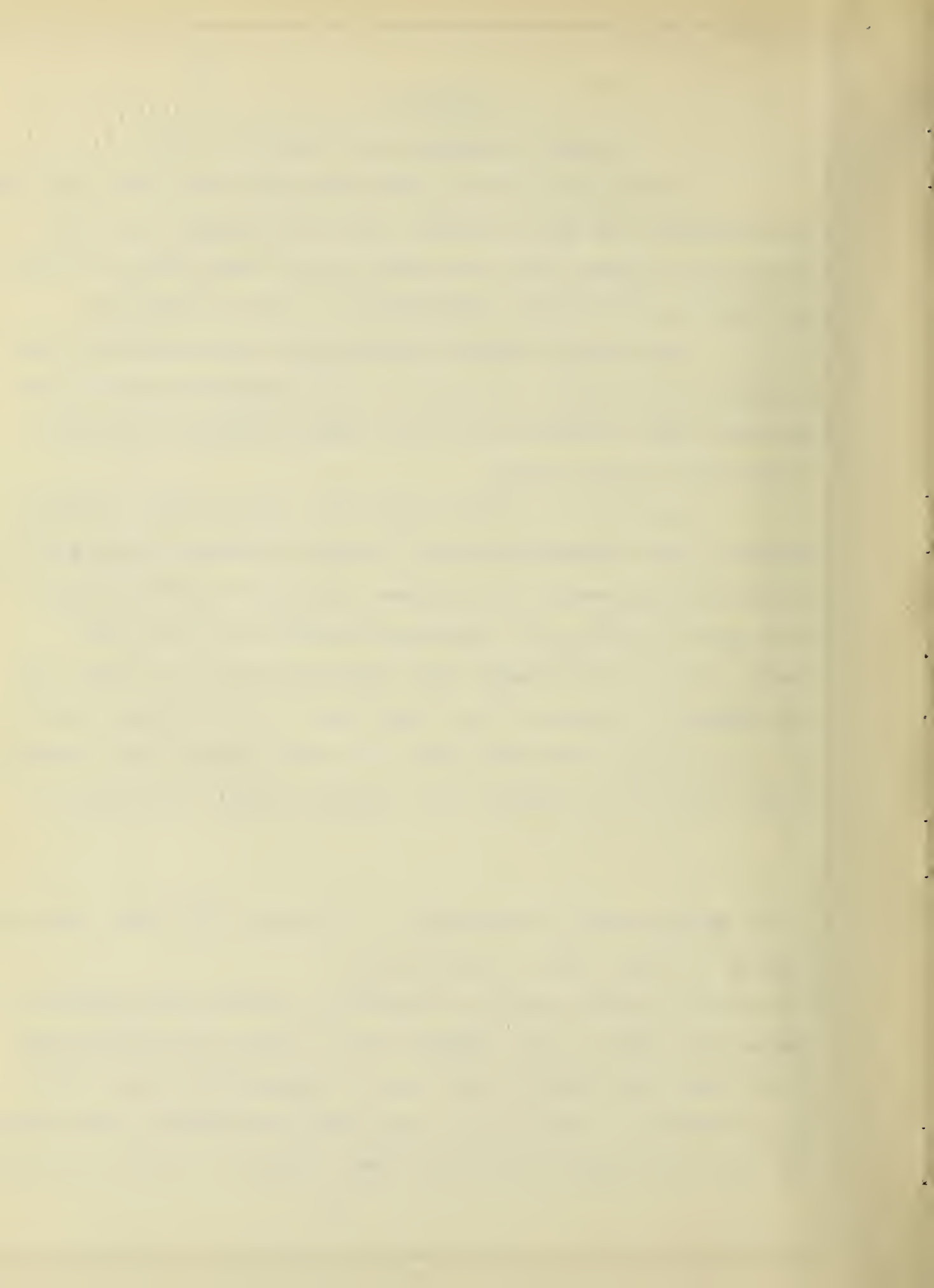
"A newspaper should do more than print the news. Any regular newspaper can get the news. It is its business. An editor should not consider that he has done a day's work unless his paper has that day bettered the surroundings in which it lives."¹

Such was the combined journalistic and socialistic idea of William R. Nelson, who in the fall of 1880 migrated from the progressive middle western city of Fort Wayne, Indiana to the frontier town of Kansas City.

As we look at Kansas City today with its miles of paved avenues lined by beautiful homes, its great Convention Hall capable of seating twenty-five thousand, and its beautiful art gallery rapidly filling with the masterpieces of today and yesterday, it is hard to imagine the little "mud town" of 1880. One can picture Mr. Nelson on his initial visit to the village standing on the banks of the Kaw river from whose filthy, flock-bearing waters the citizens secured their drinking water! Or we may see

¹ Mr. George Longon, City Editor of the Kansas City Star, quoting William R. Nelson under whom he worked.

^{2(a)} William Rockhill Nelson, Chapter II, "Founding and Growth of The Kansas City Star." p. 17: "Kansas City was then the muddiest town in the wide, wide world. There were no pavements and only a few plank sidewalks. A few street cars bobbed along behind tired mules. The Kaw River furnished the city water. Grace or beauty or utility



him in our mind's eye gingerly picking his footing among the mud holes of the wagon roads in crossing from one plank walk to another. Standing in front of the country-type Main street stores it is not difficult to imagine his indignation at a conversation between two of the "Get Rich Quick" type of citizens -- which he repeated to members of his staff later.

Exclaims one new fortune hunter, "You've got the worst mud-hole of a town here I ever saw. Why don't you pave your street?"

"Me pave it!", answers the other, "I don't care if they ever pave it. I live in Louisville."


Such conditions of filth and sordidness, such attitudes of selfish negligence, would have aroused any energetic young man of a distinctly progressive character to action. To such a man as Mr. Nelson, whose life thus far had been one experimental undertaking after another, they were a distinct challenge.

General Sherman¹ has explained that one cannot in retrospection discover the true motives which led to the creation of a great work or a successful undertaking. This is true in the case of Mr. Nelson. It is really beyond the power of those who view

did not exist."

(b) Also personal description by Myrtle Hale, resident of Kansas City since 1865.

¹ General Sherman has also said that it is unwise to give a reason for an action before doing it, because so many better reasons may turn up afterward.



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what he has accomplished today to tell whether his creation of the Kansas City Star as a Social Force was the result of deliberate planning, foresight and training, or whether, after the loss of his fortune he made a random guess and was fortunate enough to select a place so well suited for his energetic purposes. To accomplish any great masterpiece "two powers, the power of the man and the power of the moment, must concur and the man is not enough without the moment."¹ Looking at Kansas City with its rudimentary foundations, we realize now just how propitious the moment was for a "master builder." The town in 1880 was in dire need of an architect, a genius of energy and foresight. William Rockhill Nelson in 1880 was in need of a promising site in which to build, through his great creative energies a newspaper that should fulfill his idea. Whether he at this time discerned this correlation of needs, whether here beside the Kaw river, he saw the promised city and himself the guiding prophet is doubtful. The members of the staff of the Kansas City Star say that he did realize, firmly believe, and definitely state that he saw both.

"It was not chance," the issue of April 13, 1915 declared

¹ Arnold, Mathew: "The Function of Criticism."

everyman edition, p.-4.

"that impelled Mr. Nelson in 1880 to sell his interest in the Sentinel of Fort Wayne and come to Kansas City. Before settling down in the rough hewn town that Kansas City was then, he scrutinized the whole wide western field from St. Louis to San Francisco and also some cities in the East with an estimating and prophecy-ing eye. This choice of a place to locate narrowed down to three cities, Brooklyn, N.Y., St. Louis and Kansas City. He then weighed the advantages and the future as he saw it of those three cities and confidentially cast his lot with Kansas City. The wisdom of that decision never fluttered in a moment's doubt in the years that follow."

Although we may not unquestionably accept this assured retrospective statement of the motives of Mr. Nelson in settling in Kansas City, yet we must agree that the choice was mutually beneficial for the man and the city. More than this we cannot help but see that the training of his youth and manhood had been of such a forcibly energetic character that such a deliberate choice just at this time was not impossible. Just as the early life of Sir Walter Scott with his struggles with the "breakers" find expression in his works,

so the struggles of the early life of William Rockhill Nelson laid the foundation for his later success. Just as the ancestors of Sir Walter Scott, with their Tory sympathies and enthusiastic devotion to the king, marked the life and books¹ of the author so the ancestry of William Rockhill Nelson, with its long list of founders of cities and builders of states found regeneration in the undertakings and final accomplishment of the man who was to become the architect of Kansas City.

Three hundred years before William Rockhill Nelson or Kansas City became names, two of the Nelson family had aided in the founding and building of the city of Harlem.² One of his ancestors had his signature attached to the grant given by the Indians for the site of New York. Another founded the city of Poughkeepsie. Still another served as an early supreme court judge.³ His grandfather, John Nelson, received five hundred acres of land in Tompkins County, New York, for heroic services in the Revolutionary War. It was a race of fighters as well as builders.

As the Nelsons of the early pioneer days helped to build the East, so the Nelsons of a later period aided in laying the foundations of the West. At the age of twenty, Sir Isaac DeGroff Nelson,

1 Example: Woodstock: The comparative virtues of the Royalists (Lees) as compared to the Co^{an}venters.

Example 2: "Montrose"

² Names mentioned in Land Grants of City of Harlem.

³ William Rockhill Nelson, p. 2.

the father of William Rockhill Nelson, left his ancestral home in Poughkeepsie with his three sisters and took a residence at Fort Wayne, Indiana. There he married Elizabeth Rockhill, the quaker daughter of a pioneer congressman of Indiana. In the training of their son they combined the educational and cultural traditions of this rich ancestral background of the East with the courageous experimental spirit of the pioneer West. During his boyhood, it would seem that the Western "dare devil spirit" had entirely conquered the nature of the lad -- leaving the ancestral traditions of culture undeveloped. Only his later interest in the highest culture, in art and literature, prove that altho the result of the Western environment came first, it was only the natural rollicking of a young Eastern colt with Western breeding.

"Genius is mainly an affair of energy,"¹says Mathew Arnold. If this is true -- and Mathew Arnold offers proof in famous writers of the energetic English race -- William R. Nelson showed signs of genius from early youth. He was the type of boy whose mother complains "He's never still a moment". Because this energy seems to have fallen into the misdirected channels of the proverbial "bad boy" he was sent to Notre Dame. "It was a sort of Botany Bay for bad boys," was his own description of the school. But even the

¹ Arnold, Mathey. Essay on "Literary Influence of Academies." Everyman's Edition, p. 31.

strict discipline here failed to quell the spirited actions of this "bad boy" and so at the end of two years he was advised not to return. In a letter to Reverend Father Cavanaugh, president of the University of Notre Dame, which he wrote at the time Notre Dame conferred upon him the Doctor of Laws, he said:

"I always resented parental restraint -- not from lack of affection for my father, but because I never enjoyed being bossed. I have to confess I don't to this day. It was my disposition to feel that nobody had any rights over me."

Here he touches the keynote of his own weakness! As early as his school days we find that determination not to be bossed rooted firmly in his character. That very same determination to be lord and master of all directed in the wrong channels instead of the right would have made him one of the most tyrannical bosses, one of the cruellest slave drivers in the United States. This same spirit of domination carried to the extreme was the root of military prowess and aristocratic tyranny of Coriolanus. It was the cause of Napoleon's fame. Directed in wrong channels it makes the cruellest of tyrants. Directed wisely it gives the world its master-builders. William Rockhill Nelson became one of the masterbuilders of the West. It was this spirit brooking no rivalry that made men hate him! It was this spirit that made men love him!

After his hurried school life, his career assumed a zig zag course of undertakings and half-achievements. He jumped from one occupation to another evidently hunting for something that would give him an opportunity to vent his untiring energies -- that would give him a field in which he could be master and builder.

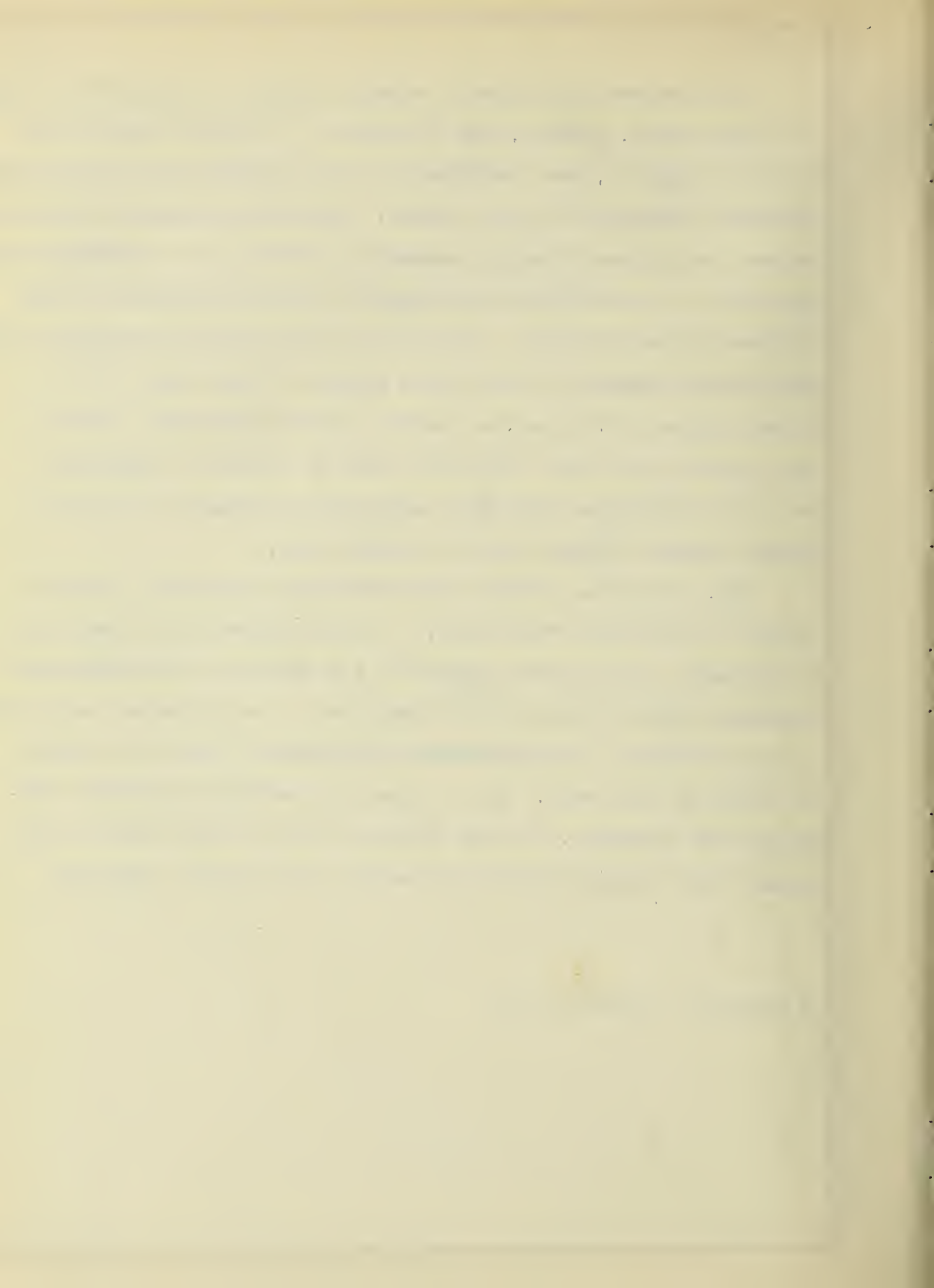
From study at Notre Dame to the study of Law at Fort Wayne was a small change. But supervised study of any type came to a sudden halt by his decision to go west and aid in the construction of the Southern Pacific railroad. At twenty he felt certain that he knew the route and most efficient means of construction. So he confidentially left for Fort Smith, Arkansas, only to be recalled by his father. "This incident," says a member of the Star staff, "illustrates the self-reliance, energy and imagination that were a mark of his whole career." It also marks the indefiniteness of final purpose, the impulsiveness, lack of careful consideration that marked his career at this period.

A trip to the cotton fields of the south was his next adventure. With a friend, who, like himself, knew only the western plains and sandy soils of Indiana, he undertook to manage a southern plantation. The fact that the undertaking failed tells the wisdom of such an experiment. But it was only one more stepping stone in the evolution of a determined, forceful character.

The contracting business suddenly assumed an interest for him. "He built roads, bridges, and buildings." ¹ In this field he met with more success, even introducing into Indiana for the first time Nicholson pavement for city streets. Politics attracted him and he became the Indiana campaign manager for Tilden in his candidacy for president. He had by this time massed a fortune estimated at two hundred thousand dollars. But he was still financing his former partner who had remained in the cotton regions of the south. The utter failure of this partner caused his own bankruptcy. It was the crisis of his life. Without a cent he turned to journalism. For two years he was part owner and acted as manager of the Fort Wayne Sentinel. Then he went to Kansas City.

Mr. Nelson was at this time thirty nine years old. He had sowed the proverbial "wild oats." He had been west and been south in business. He had been manager in his state for an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Presidency. He had massed and lost a large fortune -- on experimental investment. Now he was ready to begin his life work. And he chose journalism plus Kansas City. He had had adventure. He was seeking to try out the ideas he had gained and formulated through adventure. He was not a fortune

¹ William R. Nelson p. 11.



hunter stopping in Kansas City for a few years to win in land gambles what he might before he moved to a more profitable site.

He was a middle aged man seeking for a home in both the domestic and business sense.

In journalism, he was not a cub reporter. He had been with a newspaper long enough to "know the game." But he had not been with one long enough to become a tool of any editors' ideas. He had his own ideas -- founded not upon "cut and dried" journalism, but upon adventurous experience -- successes and failures. And as he had himself, he was determined to be a master -- not be mastered.

Although it is impossible for me to imagine that Mr. Nelson sat down and deliberately summed up the advantages he had gained through thirty nine years experience and planned to use these as a means of building a great metropolis through a great newspaper; yet, viewing his life as he must today -- we cannot but see the value of the fact that he was ready for Kansas City and Kansas City was ready for him. Nor can we deny that he had a socialistic aim in his

first edition of the "Kansas City Evening Star" published Saturday, September 18, 1880. He says, "Kansas City is the commercial center of the great Missouri Valley, and no city in the country contains within itself greater possibilities or offers brighter prospects for the future. No city in the land is growing more rapidly or attracting more attention in all quarters. ----- Having entire confidence in the future of the City, The Evening Star enters the field without a doubt that it will achieve unqualified success and in a very short time become one of the recognized institutions of Kansas City."

-- "The Evening Star will labor with especial zeal and earnestness in behalf of all measures tending to advance the interests of Kansas City and develop the resources of the Great Missouri valley."

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Nelson: The Architect for Kansas City.

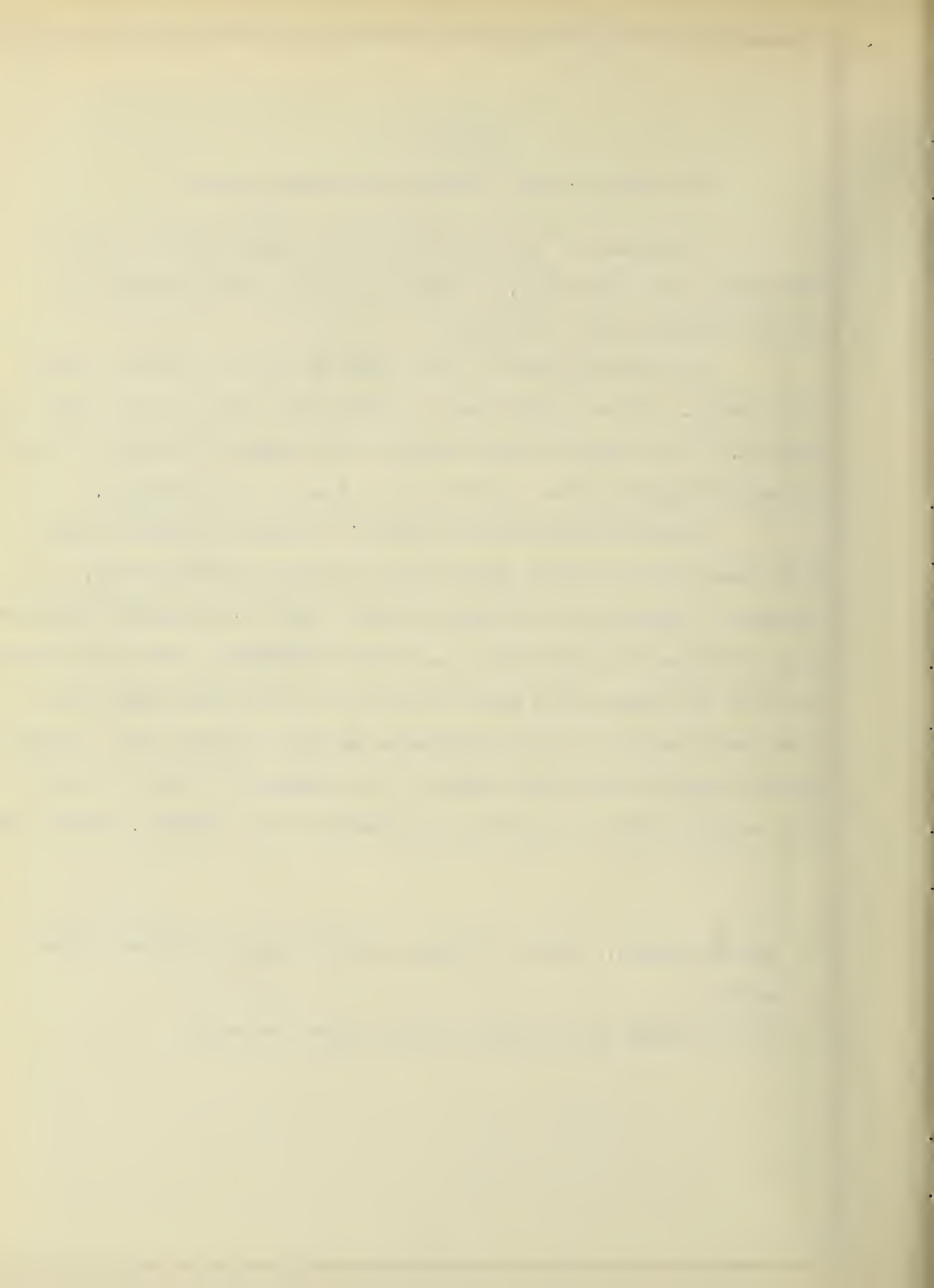
"The mass of mankind will always treat lightly even the things the most venerable, if they do not present themselves as visible forces before its eyes."¹

Mr. Nelson seems to have felt the force of such a truth very keenly. He was determined to make Kansas City "a good place to live in."² He chose his news sheet as the means of making the needs of Kansas City "visible forces" in the eyes of its citizens.

Some have doubted Mr. Nelson's success in making these needs seem visible forces before the populace of Kansas City. A prominent journalist of Chicago declares that the remarkable improvement of Kansas City was due to an already awakened group of citizens, and that the Kansas City Star did no more to aid them than every newspaper does to aid the progressive people of every city. Anyone has the right to doubt the power of the Kansas City Star. Only a very careful study of conditions in Kansas City, however, before the

1. Arnold, Mathew. Essay on "Pagan and Christian Religions Statements."

2. Motto adopted by the Star in the fight for Parks.



advent of the Star as compared to the progress of the city after Mr. Nelson's settlement there, can give any fair grounds for judgment.

In 1880 Kansas City was a "mud hole." No doubts can attach themselves to this fact. By 1900 it was one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the largest commercial centers of the West.¹ That the city became a great commercial center through natural "booms" there is no doubt. But it is equally certain that it never became a center of beauty with 2,482 acres of parks and thirty nine miles of boulevards² without some visible force to encourage the citizens who paid the special assessments. What was this visible force?

Publicity has always been the force that created and carried to completion any informatory undertaking. The twelve disciples were the press agents for Christianity after the death of Jesus. " " was the pass word for the French revolution. "In ancient days the ear held reign and the sphere of influence was limited by aural range. The newspaper of today occupies the position of the herald of old."³

1. Encyclopaedia Americana. "It is one of the largest commercial centers of the West with twenty railroads, thirty three lines, two hundred passenger trains entering and leaving a day and three hundred fifty freight trains." (1904)

2. Warner, Charles Dudley, "Studies of the West." Harpers' V. 71. page 759.

3. Keeley, James, Editor of Chicago Herald in a speech delivered in Iowa City in 1915.

In 1880 the day of oral publicity had already passed. The newspapers were the visible forces. At this time there were no papers in Kansas City except the new eight page Kansas City Star supplying a stimulus to city improvement. There were four other news sheets that served to record the daily street brawls or political differences of the frontier townsmen. "The Times" heralded the members of the Democratic party as the only righteous men of the community, the "Journal", the Republicans. In addition, "there was a rag-picker or two and a plunderer in the field."¹ But there was no paper urging these townsmen to pave their streets, lay out parks and build town halls. Nor were there any men giving expression to such ideas within aural range in as far as we can determine.

But Mr. Nelson undertook to instruct the people in their duty to their city through his new weapon of publicity. He began with a campaign for improvement of streets because he realized that just as cement or brick are necessary for the foundation of a house, so are they necessary for the foundation of a city. During the first week of its existence the Star contained the following editorial:

"The city is in its streets, the country is in its roads, the Nation is in its highways of rail and water. Civilization follows no dim forest trail; that is always the savage's route. Civilization treads established thoroughfares. Everything depends upon accessibility and in human intercourse accessibility means pathways, roads and streets. ---"

1. White, William Allen. Colliers. vol. 55, p. 12-13. June 10, 1915.

"Four other Kansas City papers, "The Times, a Democrat sheet and the

'Journal a Republican were the party thunderers, and there was a rag-

"Continual, perpetual is the demand upon the streets, the roads, the thoroughfares. Great as was the greatest of Caesars, greatest was he as a road builder."

The third month after the founding of the Star, Mr. Nelson published an editorial on streets that gave forcibly the specific needs for street improvements before the entire reading populace:

"Individuals profit by judicious and liberal expenditures of money. So do cities. Kansas City has reached a point where she must make such expenditures if she is to occupy the proud position which is within her reach. The pinching economy, the picayunish policy, the miserable parsimony, which characterize our city government must now be abandoned, or the city's growth will be most seriously retarded and her best interests greatly crippled.

"Kansas City needs good streets, good sidewalks, good sewers, decent public buildings, better street lights, more fire protection, a more efficient police force, and many other things which are necessary to health, prosperity and growth of a great city. She needs these improvements now. They will cost money and a great deal of it. The Evening Star is greatly mistaken if an overwhelming majority of the tax payers are not perfectly willing to spend the money if they have any assurance that it will be honestly
picker or two and a plunderer in the field.

and judiciously expended."

A member of the Star staff has summed up the scope of Mr. Nelson's interest in streets in the following paragraph:

"Upon the subject of streets in all its manifold phases he was always busy through the columns of the Star. Scientific construction, the grading and draining, the proper width for economy and the correct crowning, foundation and surface, choice of materials as demonstrated by experience or by test or by limitation of expenditure, guttering and curbing, sidewalks, the adornment by turf and by trees -- all of these he studied and discussed in the Star. The effective care and maintenance of the streets, the building of bridges and viaducts, the lighting of the streets, the obstruction of sidewalks, the flushing of catch basins, the projection of billboards, the dripping dirt wagon, proper guidance of traffic, the sore-shouldered and over-worked dray horse, the encroaching push cart, were details of the mighty subject of streets which he kept constantly before the public."¹

Hand in hand with the fight for streets was waged the struggle for public parks. He felt that parks were as essential as

1. William Rockhill Nelson. Chapter III, "Pulling A City Out Of The Mud." p. 29.

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streets to the beauty of a city. The problem before him of establishing parks was even more difficult than had been the building of streets.

"With a city practically complete in its lines, park building means creating among people who know nothing of public pleasure grounds an appreciation of their value and their economy; it means overcoming the opposition of the community's wealthy land owners, men who have money enough to buy unproductive land and hold it for the increased value the city's growth will bring to it."¹

In 1880 Kansas City was ready for its awakening.² George A. Kessler, a young Easterner who had studied gardens in Germany, migrated to Kansas City in 1884. To him fell the honor of designing and erecting the great Park and Boulevard system of Kansas City. A statement of his made in 1906, when he had become one of the most famous Park architects in the United States shows definitely to what source Kansas City owes the beginning of its artificial beauty:

"Not long after I came West," Mr. Kessler stated, "Mr.

1. Schott, Henry, "A City's Fight for Beauty." World's Work, p. 7191.

2. Schott, Henry. "In the eighties Kansas City found itself with all its physical features in the rough.. Then this community stopped for breath, took a look at itself, and found something was lacking, something had been forgotten."

William R. Nelson, editor of the Kansas City Star, asked me to submit plans for the improvement of West Bluff. I climbed into the tower of the Union Depot and made my sketches. These drawings were the first done on the Park system of Kansas City." Twelve years from that date the first park in Kansas City was finished.¹

The twelve year campaign for Parks and Boulevards is characteristic of all campaigns waged under the auspices of the Star. The plans were made, the drawings ready, and the expense estimated before a word was printed. Today a large framed drawing of the "Nelson Main street"² decorates one of the walls of the editorial office of the Star. It is a "Michigan Avenue," only more beautiful than Chicago's lake side drive, which Mr. Nelson had planned as a model highway for the central street of the city. Just as in this case, before attempting to wage a campaign for city improvements, all plans were completed, all possible means devised, all expenses estimated before the plan was proposed so that any argument may be clearly and accurately answered in the editorial columns of the news sheet.

1. Schott, Henry. "A City's Fight For Beauty." World's Work, Vol. 11, p. 7191.

2. A plan proposed by Mr. Nelson for the widening and beautifying of Main street, Kansas City. The picture hangs on the East wall of the Editorial office and is "One of the things we are working for" as Mr. G. B. Longon, city editor, explained.

In 1892, ten years after the first plans were drawn, a Board of Park Commissioners was appointed to promote the project. This marked the beginning of the active fight between the "men of acre property" and the public spirited benefactors and city builders. Until this time the fight had been in the main a single handed combat between the Star and the unresponsive public. But gradually men with breadth of vision and progressive ideas of municipal planning had answered the daily challenges of the Star's column by forming a "side" in favor of building parks and boulevards. It was a "side" because the majority of wealthy landowners, as soon as they realized that the Star's cry for improvements was not merely a "cry" but an active force, combined in a strong opposition party. In this campaign as in all others, it is difficult to find any direct reference to Mr. Nelson. As a man he remained unknown, voicing his opinions only through his editorial columns. Yet we find enough to realize he was the real power behind the fight. The Parks were won, just as the great campaigns for War funds are being raised today, through publicity. "In this struggle was originated a fine example of slang in word "knocker." The Kansas City Star, the most active influence in demanding parks, attached to the opposition the name "The Hammer and Padlock" club, the leader of which became known as the knocker.

The 'Padlock' referred to the pocketbook."¹ This was, however, not only a fine example of slang but was a notable example of forcible journalism. Just how forcible, how constructive it was is shown in the following story:

This is the statement of an outsider who views the great Park and Boulevard system as the result of a few broad minded, far sighted benefactors like Mr. Swope. "In the early nineties, men of the city became impressed with the fact that in its rapid growth Kansas City had failed to make healthy provision for park spaces. ... A millionaire philanthropist of the city, Mr. Thomas H. Swope, deeded the Park Board a rural tract of virgin meadow and timber land covering 1,350 acres and lying several miles beyond the city limits south."²

But the men within the Star office and the Park Board Commissioners view this "gift" from a different angle. In this campaign Colonel Swope was chosen by the Star as the president of the Hammer and Padlock club. After an unusually severe attack had been made upon him Colonel Swope went to the Star office.

1. Schott, Henry, "A City's Fight For Beauty." World's Work, Vol. 11. page. 119.
2. Wirick, Ray F. "The Park and Boulevard System of Kansas City." American City, Vol. 3, p. 211.

"Where's that old scoundrel, Bill Nelson?" he demanded of Joe O'Brien, who was at the city desk.

"Mr. Nelson has gone home. Why Colonel Swope, what is the matter?"

Colonel Swope produced a cartoon that had appeared in that days issue of the Star ridiculing a man named Stope for his lack of municipal foresight, and for his hammer and padlock means of buying and keeping property.

"That's just the way I talk," he shouted. "Everyone knows it's me."

A few weeks later Colonel Swope donated Swope Park, one of the largest and most beautiful parks of the entire system. When Mr. Nelson heard of the gift he was not overly enthusiastic. "Darn the old scamp! The land he has left around the park will increase in value a million dollars!"¹ But the credit has been given to Colonel Swope, through Mr. Nelson's directions.²

"Curiously enough, the park and boulevard system of Kansas City is the obvious monument to Mr. Nelson's thirty five

¹ The Independent. April 17, 1915. Also personal information secured at Kansas City or from staff members.

² "But he ordered the staff to blow the trumpets and beat the tom-toms; and verily no praise of Colonel Swope was lacking in the Star." Independent April 17, 1915.

years' activity."³ Yet they are only the floor plan of the architect's work. As he himself said, "Streets come first!" The streets led to parks, the parks to buildings and houses. During his thirty five years' residence in Kansas City, Mr. Nelson built hundreds of houses which he rented. "He sold only two homes that he built as far as I know. He loved them all. It was only another means of helping to make Kansas City a "good place to live in,"⁴ declared Mr. H. J. Haskell, present editorial writer of the Star and the friend and secretary of Colonel Nelson.

Beautiful, well built, and practically economic homes always found what would commonly be termed advertising space in the Star's news columns. On Thursday, December 4, 1908, for example, there is a three column cut on the second page of the 'Kansas City Times' (the morning edition of the 'Kansas City Star') of "Six of Sixteen Bungalows Built by W. H. Collins." Over one half column is devoted to the description of the convenient situation and modern equipment of the pretty bungalows. It is not an advertisement, at least, not in the usual sense. It is gratuitous advertising given the erection of pretty homes; it is encouragement to other

³ White, William Allen. "The Man Who Made The Star" Colliers, June, 26, 1915.

⁴ Oral statement to author.

real estate dealers and an inducement to readers to rent such homes. Before Mr. Nelson printed such an article he sent a reporter on a thorough investigation. Then he printed both the picture and the article because, with the co-operation of his reporter, he had decided they would be of value to the city as a whole as inducements for further building, and that they might aid certain readers who were seeking pretty, inexpensive homes, to locate in desirable quarters.¹ Such an article, such free advertisement, was of no value to the Star; from a strictly newspaper viewpoint it was not even news. In a city the size of Kansas City how many newspapers would consider the building of houses news? It was simply a little act of service to his readers. It was one means used by the city architect to make beautiful, economic homes "visible forces" in the eyes of the mass of citizens.

Another subject which he considered of primary importance to all who lived in Kansas City was the waterways. Situated as the city is at the junction of the Missouri and Kansas rivers the question was vital to the health as well as to the economic prosperity of the inhabitants. "Navigate the river" was one of the slogans of the

1. Personal information secured in Kansas City.

2. Street, Julien. "Abroad At Home." Chap. IV "The Beginning of The West." Colliers. Vol. 58, p. 11.

Star from its earliest days. Mr. Nelson realized the importance of relieving the railroad congestion by navigation. He foresaw the possibility of the "tie ups" of the winter of 1918 because of rail congestion; twenty years ago. Because he knew that Kansas City was one of the centers ¹ which needed to utilize its river facilities he created an active campaign for river transportation and himself donated \$50,000 to the enterprise.²

1. Smith, J. Russel. "Commerce and Industry" p. 298. Henry Holt & Co., 1916. "St. Louis served by twenty four railroads and receiving three million loaded cars a year, and Kansas City served by thirty nine railroads were connected by 406 miles of navigable river which for years were entirely unused.

2. William Rockhill Nelson. Chapter III. "Pulling A City Out of ^T Mud." "At last the sentiment was ripe, a public company was organized and more than one million dollars in stock was subscribed. In this enterprise Mr. Nelson contributed fifty thousand dollars, not as a commercial proposition but as an act of loyalty to Kansas City."

Not only did Mr. Nelson realize the economic services the river might render Kansas City, but he realized that it might prove to be a place of great beauty to the city and the state. In 1908 he commenced his campaign for a River Highway from Kansas City to St. Louis. The first hint of such a scheme may be found in the issue of the Times for October 27, 1908.¹ A complete sketch of a portion of such a highway accompanies the initiation of the idea in the center of the first page. From that day, the highway became one of the schemes for state improvements which Mr. Nelson wished to make an actuality through a publicity campaign. Again -- the plans for such a highway did not make news. It was what that faction of Kansas City which opposed all city improvements called a "pipe dream," -- an impossibility. But just as the theory that the world was round was a "dream" until Columbus proved it an actuality, so pulling Kansas City out of the mud seemed an impossibility until the Star

¹ Under the sketch, named "A Sketch of a Possible Missouri River Transportation Route", was an article proposing a great state highway that "would Have River Road and Railways Linked Across Missouri." The story begins:

"A great, broad highway, a boulevard and a river grade right of way for electric lines and steam railways should be constructed across the state of Missouri from Kansas City to St. Louis. This should be done in connection with the improvement of the Missouri River from Kansas City to its mouth."

became its leader and made it a possibility. Even the highway may become an actuality in a few years. "I don't enjoy travelling in a well trodden path," Mr. Nelson said, "the Star must pioneer."¹ So the Star continued to pioneer in the waterway question. Mr. Nelson expresses his ideas of such an undertaking in an editorial published on November 20, 1908.

"Foresight has enabled Kansas City to secure a fine park and boulevard system at reasonable cost, but the lack of it has lost to the city a great central park, which might have been secured when the Dundee fair grounds were offered at what now appears to have been an absurdly low price.

"Instances of gains through foresight and losses through lack of it might be multiplied out of the history of Kansas City. But there was more reason for the people of the early days not to foresee the city's present greatness and needs than there is for the people of the present time to misjudge the future possibilities of demands. And relatively the reasons for making provisions now for the future of Kansas City are even stronger than were the reasons in the past to make provision for the present. After all, there are no great propositions needful to Kansas City that are not

¹ Cresley, Charles Phelps. "A great Editor's Methods." *Colliers* April 8, 1916.

at this time or that will not be in the comparatively near future easy of accomplishment, provided their importance be understood by the people."

So this editor constantly exercised the influence of his powerful weapon for a city Beautiful as well as a City Useful. "Each day brought him some new idea for the betterment of the city. Many of his ideas have never been worked out into realities but we are fighting for them still."¹ Even the bridges were the result of his foresight. He built the first modern bridge, a beautiful arched structure of native stone, across Brush Creek at Rockhill road, out of his own resources. To the iron bridges which the city had been building he gave the name "tin bridge" and fought through the Star until the county was induced to build bridges of native stone and concrete.²

A social force? The beautifying of Kansas City may be credited with even more of a social influence than making Kansas City "a good place to live in." One day in crossing Holmes Square Mr. Kessler, the Architect for this and all other parks made the following statement to a friend.

¹ Oral statement to author by George B. Longon.

² William Rockhill Nelson, p. 30. Also personal information secured in Kansas City.

"I don't think I've ever seen a fight in a park. These children come from very poor families and many of them haven't had good training but they cause no trouble here. When we were building this square the workmen had to lock up their tools every night. Nothing was safe. Now the gardeners and caretakers may leave things out for days and nothing is taken. The children play all over the place and not a flower will be taken; they damage nothing. There's not a "Keep Off The Grass" sign in a Kansas City Park. It's rare that the children abuse their privileges. They seem to look on the parks as their own, especially is this the case among the children in the poorer neighborhoods. And the children now are clean -- at least their faces -- when they come to Holmes Square."¹

This is the testimony of the man who has supervised the building of the entire park and boulevard system, -- of the man who gives all credit to Mr. Nelson for the origin of the plan, who names the Kansas City Star as the most powerful influence in the evolution of the system.

A social force? Very few were the issues of the Kansas

¹ Shott, Henry. "A City's Fight For Beauty" V. 11, page. 719

Content of statement confirmed by author's observation and inquiry in Kansas City.

City Star in which Mr. Nelson did not propose some new plan for beautifying the city or devise some scheme for promoting an old plan in a new way. To record all these would be to reprint the issues of the Star. This is not news. It is social service. Should a newspaper be a social service implement? We may quarrel on this subject. But in view of the facts we cannot quarrel on the thesis that William Rockhill Nelson was the masterbuilder for the architectural growth of Kansas City and that he used as his sharpest tool the Kansas City Star. It was the means that made the needs of the city visible forces "before the eyes of its citizens."

CHAPTER III.

A Servant Of The Public Comfort.

"The Star is published for the people who pay it ten cents a week. It is their newspaper. It must be their champion in everything." This is the purpose for which Mr. Nelson named The Star.

There was no undertaking too great, and there was no service too small for the Star to render its readers. It's object was to be the servant of the public comfort.

On one of the center posts that uphold the ceiling of the great editorial room¹ of the Kansas City Star there is a glassed bulletin board. It contains a large printed sheet named "Our Things" which was tacked there by Mr. Nelson years ago. Here are named forty "things" for which the Star stands as sponser. Some of the objects have been already gained, or partially accomplished, such as the waterway improvement, public parks, street cleaning, extended use of school buildings, a public art gallery, municipal ownership for public utilities in Kansas City, ^{Kansas} and many more. The others are still purposes for which the Star is fighting and will continue to fight as long as the spirit and wil of Mr. Nelson dominate the policy of the paper.

1. See p. 63

Among these items are the freedom from franchise grabbers and, to quote the words of "Our Things" exactly :

"A public defender for criminal courts.

"Prosecuting to get 'a record of convictions' is dead wrong.

"Abolish 'the general property tax.' It simply means general perjury.

"Improvement of property should not be taxed.

"The William Rockhill Nelson broad, low grade traffic board in Main street, south from 27th.

"Widen streets.

"Constant study of traffic way needs.

"Everybody on the force should study the needs of every section of Kansas City.

"Boost the jitneys."

On this last subject of "jitneys" Mr. Nelson took a very definite stand -- as indeed, he did on all questions. But this was the more noticeable since it was contrary to the stand newspapers of western cities usually assumed on this subject.¹ As was his custom, Mr. Nelson befriended the poor man. He said "I am never afraid that the man on top of the mine cannot take care of themselves. My concern is for the men at the bottom of the mine digging coal." ² The

1. Milwaukee Sentinel, Kenosha papers, Racine papers.

2. In general there was united opposition by the press against the jitney because they rivalled the street car monopolies. This united opposition was the cause of their final downfall.

jitney in his estimation was one of the means of helping the man at the bottom of the mine. They would give the very poor a chance to ride in the automobile as well as the very rich. No longer would the fatigued shop girl be forced to cling to a strap in a crowded street car. She could ride in an automobile for the same price.

On April 19, 1915, he wrote the following editorial:

"A year ago, the park board made a contract for transportation in Swope Park. At the time it was made the contract was a good one for the public. It was intended to furnish better and cheaper transportation about the park than would be possible in any other way.

"But last Sunday when a jitney appeared, ready to take a load of passengers to the zoo at a lower price than ever had been made in the park, it had to be excluded under the terms of the contract. Fortunately the contract has only a fortnight more to run. Then the park board will be able to admit the jitneys and every family no matter how slender its resources will be able to go automobile riding in that splendid people's play ground.

"Doesn't the incident show how foolish long time transportation contracts -- as franchises -- are?

"Suppose the park board had made a 30 year contract for

Swope Park instead of a 1 year contract! Think how it would have handicapped the development of the Park's use.

"The only safe way is to keep control of city transportation in the hands of the people, so they will be able at any time to take advantage of any improvements that may be made. The country is on the eve of a revolution in rapid transit in cities. The development of the jitneys is a forecast of what may come in time.

"No city can afford to risk strangling itself with a long term franchise to trolleys, any more than the park board could afford to make a long term contract for transportation in Swope Park."

Very early in the career of the Star did Mr. Nelson seek to benefit the public as a composite group through the editorial and news columns. The story of the rebuilding of the Coates Opera House is an often-repeated tale of those who tell of the reformatory work of the Star. But it was a very important incident as it gave Mr. Nelson an introduction to prominent men of the city who were later to be of value to his paper.¹ It also showed these same

influential men in a very emphatic manner that the Star stood for justice as the Editor saw justice, not as a few men, of whatever importance, politically, judged justice. The story can be briefly told.

In 1880, its first year, The Star commenced an active campaign against the Coates Opera House, which it hailed as a "public menace." This Opera House was a large hall situated above a grocery store. The building was the usual wooden "country store" type. There was no fire escape, and no means of protection against fire. This was the only theatre in Kansas City open to decent, high class performances , and for this

very reason, the Star demanded the building be reconstructed to accommodate larger audiences in safety. It pointed out that the substructure of the building was not strong enough for even small audiences. A large sear had already been rent in the rear of the building, and the entire structure was liable to collapse at any moment. The attack was very spirited. Colonel Coates, who owned the Hall, considered the campaign a personal insult, and undertook to injure Mr. Nelson's character. But the Star persisted. One day the Colonel surprised the entire staff by arriving at the office and remarking, "Mr. Nelson, you are right and I am wrong. My theatre is unsafe. At first I could not see it so, but now I do realize it and I am going to reconstruct it." It was Colonel Coates, who, four years later, loaned Mr. Nelson the money to purchase his first Perfecting Press. In February 1916, Mr. Nelson received a letter from I. L. Coates, son of Colonel Coates. One paragraph of the letter reads:

"I consider the Star unsurpassed by any paper in the United States. Its principles, its policies, its character and its persistent and watchful activity for the accomplishment of reforms and the upbuilding of the city proclaim its greatness and certainly merit the admiration of any fair minded man."

Just as the Star fought for a safe Opera House in 1880, to further the comfort of the Kansas City theatre goers so it has always sought to bring aid in all lines to any who were in need. For

years it has been fighting to relieve the suffering of the poor during the very cold months. This last winter, 1918, the citizens of Kansas City, in addition to being starved for coal were without gas most of the season. It was in the winter of 1908 that Mr. Nelson foresaw this condition and warned the people. In the issue for December 4, 1908 he said, "Kansas City Householders are beginning to understand why furnaces with fuel gas connections are called 'hot air furnaces'."

In another issue a few days later he sarcastically recalls the various excuses of the gas company for their failure to give adequate service:

"Every time there has been a shortage in the supply of natural gas in Kansas City this winter some new reason has been advanced. Once flood water was the cause, again the engines at the compression stations were not working effectively; then it was suggested that the distributing system at Kansas City is not adequate. Now there is a new reason. ... " Again as a suggested relief for the situation the editorial paragraph carried the following:

"In view of what we have learned I am constrained to say that the wise citizen will provide a ton or two of coal in the cellar and see that his furnace grate is ready for instant use."

Since that December of 1908 not a winter has passed in which the Star has not urged the citizens of Kansas City to use more coal and to depend less upon the vacillating facilities of the gas company. Just how much relief has resulted from this yearly campaign it is impossible to judge definitely. But the Star has done all in its power to promote the interest of its citizens against the Natural Gas Corporation. It has literally devoted miles of space to the discussion of and adequate means to pipe and heat the houses.

Two letters in the possession of Mrs. Nelson show the active interest Mr. Nelson took in every form of public comfort. In 1899 he wrote to Mr. U. S. Epperson: "I think that Kansas City needs a public bath house, wherein whosoever will may swim and scrub and enjoy himself without cost. Summer will be here soon and the bathing place should be ready when it comes.

"It has occurred to me that a great ball in Convention Hall would realize enough money to build and equip such a place, and with this thought in mine, I propose that if you will undertake the work

of organizing and directing such a ball, I, for my share, will stand the cost of the hall rental, the music, the decorations, the printing, and all other expense incidental to giving it, so that every dollar paid for dancing or admission tickets shall go into the building.....I may say that Messers. Van Brunt and Howe have prepared preliminary drawings, sketches and estimates, showing the feasibility of the project."

Mr. Epperson in a letter to Mrs. Nelson shortly after Colonel Nelson's death tells the rest of the story:

"I was more than glad to head the undertaking, and in order to make the evening attractive to those who did not dance, it was decided to precede the ball with a minstrel show. The Star's powerful backing brought to the aid of the project the personal help of a great many leading citizens who contributed much time to its success, and three hundred and twenty five young men volunteered to do their best toward providing the interesting program. ... The night's receipts were between twelve and thirteen thousand dollars. The expenses paid by Mr. Nelson were more than twenty-two hundred dollars. This amount, with some additional money, brought into ex-

istence Kansas City's first public bath, located on park ground fronting the Paseo. ... To raise the fund for the first bath, The Star devoted pages of display advertising and unlimited space in its reading columns as well.

"This one initiative on the part of Mr. Nelson is not only responsible for our public bath system, but it was such an inspiration to the young men who formed the minstrel show that other performances were given later, generally from one to two a year until a total of ten had been given. The gross receipts were more than eighty thousand dollars from which were paid the expenses of the shows which followed the first. The money was used partially for Convention Hall (which, incidentally, Mr. Nelson also fathered and twice pushed to success, the first hall having burned), at that time not entirely completed and in debt. ... Each of these performances had The Star's support in free advertising in its columns. I mention this one initiative and accomplishment, with its far reaching results, as characteristic of the way, many projects for the benefit of this city which have been born of the same mind and carried on to fulfillment by the same power."

Not only for the comfort of the Kansas City citizens has the Star been the agent. Kansas City, Kansas, lies directly across the river from Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Nelson felt that it was a part of the greater Kansas City and that it needed assistance as much as did Kansas City, Missouri. Although he did not give as much attention to the actual news of this city, since it had its own newspapers, he sought to aid the public to secure better government and more adequate facilities whenever it was in his power. He said, "Help Kansas City, Kansas, with all the power of the paper, always remembering that this paper is attorney for the men and women who pay it ten cents a week. Whatever is best for them, this paper is for." At another time he said "We ought to help Kansas City, Kansas. It is as much a part of Kansas City as the Kansas City in Missouri. The Star is under obligations to do everything in its power to help the people in that part of the city."

In 1907 a severe epidemic of contagious diseases broke out in that city. It was traced to the inadequate means of supplying water for the ever increasing population. He called a new reporter to his desk and said:

"Now I am going to give you a general assignment that will not be for a day or for a week or a month. It will be a permanent assignment that will last as long as you are on The Star." He then detailed to the man the supervision of Kansas City. "Help Kansas City with all the power of this paper," he ordered. His specific

assignment for the moment concerned the water conditions.

"Just now the people over in Kansas City, Kansas, need help to get good water." he said. I want you to go to Kansas City, Kansas, today, tomorrow and every day that is necessary, until you find out what is the shortest and most feasible way to get good water for that side and let us then help them in that way." He added that personally he did not favor municipal ownership of plants. Nearly a year later the reporter announced the result of his thorough investigation. "Municipal ownership was the suggested remedy. Mr. Nelson enthusiastically gave his support.

"I want you to know this," he said, "The Star is the only paper in the world, I suppose, without a 'fixed policy.' It is always for the thing that is the most efficient and most feasible. What it advocated yesterday, it feels at liberty to 'kick over' today if it finds what it advocated yesterday stands in the way of what it finds is a good thing today."

On November 12, 1908, The Star stated; "It is curious that twelve million gallons of good water cannot be supplied by a plant that has a capacity for only six million. ... The people of Kansas City should serve notice on the franchise grabbers that no more delay will be tolerated in the water case. The way to immediate

relief has been found in the one city plan." Within a year such relief was found. The campaign, like that for streets, parks and opera house had been commenced and forced ahead through the columns of the Star.

Nor did Mr. Nelson wish the Star to confine its influence to Kansas City, Missouri, or even the United States. In 1898 he sent a reporter to Cuba to investigate the condition of the natives who were reported as starving. When this reporter announced the starvation in Matanzas to be "an actual hideous fact" Mr. Nelson immediately used his powerful weapon of publicity for relief. Within eight days after the beginning of the campaign twenty one freight cars were carried to the steamer Utstein at New Orleans free of charge by the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railway. President McKinley sent words of approval to the Star.

But all of this solicitation for comfort was for the public as a whole, whether it be in one of the Kansas Cities or in Cuba. Mr. Nelson did not, however, limit the service of the Star to

a cosmopolitan group. He said it was to serve the individual who paid ten cents a week. Numerous incidents have been cited by The Star's enthusiastic followers of the personal service rendered. I am going to quote here three newspaper stories as excellent examples of human interest pictures.¹ They are human interest pictures, -- but the kind that bring results. They were however, of immediate interest originally only to one poor family. Any family in Kansas City which is in dire need may appeal to the Star and be assured of a similar response. I give a complete copy of the three stories which are by H. B. MacDonald, a reporter who was with Mr. Nelson twenty years before his death and who is now writing for the weekly Kansas City Star.

The Wolf Lifts a Latch.

Mrs. Tash of the Cabbage patch and her five little children are huddled around the stove in the kitchen while the snow slants past the window and the wind of the north gale whistles ---

There, "around the corner," almost crept in. To be absolutely exact, the wind moans and groans so loudly as it blows up through the many wide cracks in the bare kitchen floor that its whistling "around the corners" cannot be heard at all.

1 Cited in "Typical Newspaper Stories," by Mr. H. F. Harrington, as examples of human interest pictures.

A pot of potatoes is bubbling cheerily on the kitchen stove, every once in a while spurting a little jet of hot water from beneath the tin lid to sizzle on the hot stove and disappear in a curl of steam toward the ceiling.

The five children watch that boiling pot. In it is their supper. Mrs. Tash has a hard time keeping them away from it. David, the eldest, who is 12 years old, sits in the corner behind the stove with a piece of box cover sharpened at one end. This he occasionally inserts in the ring in the pot lid and lifts the cover to look in at the white potatoes and the water sputtering around and over them.

Now there are just two articles of food in that house of Mrs. Tash near the packing-house dump in Armourdale -- a sack of potatoes under the table and a sack of flour in the corner behind the door. The breakfast was of bread, nothing else. The dinner. Why, there wasn't any dinner. The supper is to be of potatoes and biscuit.

"Haven't you any meat?" the visitor asked Mrs. Tash of the Cabbage Patch.

"No, indeed; we haven't had any meat for a long time. I tell you, mister, meat costs too much. We just can't afford it."

"And you'll just have boiled potatoes for supper?"

"Yes, but potatoes stay with you. They're awful filling and the children like them."

Mrs. Tash of the Cabbage Patch moved from over a wide crack in the floor through which such a mighty draft was coming that it ballooned her thick skirt out like the old-fashioned hoop skirts that one sees in the fashion pictures of fifty years ago.

"Don't look at the floor," she says, "It's awful dirty. (That was the truth, too.) But if I scrubbed it the dampness might give the babies cold. And we all have to stay in the kitchen all the time in this cold weather. We haven't a stove in the other two rooms."

The little girl, Maggie, 9 years old, goes to school. The other four cannot go. Maggie is the only one of the five who has shoes that are whole.

"Maybe they are better off here with me in the kitchen than out in this snow," the mother said. "I can watch them here. But I do hope the truant officer won't come."

"It was the truant officer what made my twin sister die," piped Harry, who is 7 years old.

"Hush, Harry, you mustn't say that," interrupted this second Mrs. Wiggs, who finds a homely philosophy to cover every hardship. Then she explains: "The truant officer made his little twin sister go to school last winter in the snow when she had only rags for shoes on her feet. She died of the cough, but then I don't blame the truant officer. Children are bound to have diseases whenever God sends the sickness, no matter how they dress."

Stout little David, sitting behind the stove, says: "Well, I wish the truant officer would leave us alone or else give us shoes."

There isn't a cent in the house. The husband, who drinks, is off with his express wagon and horse, standing at the State Line waiting for a chance to haul a trunk or some other load.

"Doesn't he earn anything?" Mrs Tash was asked.

"He earned a dollar yesterday, but he didn't bring any of it home," she replied. "He had to get a bite to eat out of that

and a couple of drinks, and he had to pay on a horse blanket. It's a great expense to own a horse these days. The law makes him have the horse shod, and a lantern on the wagon, and a hitching weight and a blanket for the horse. The law thinks more of horses than it does of children. But then horses just have to work out in all kinds of weather."

"I should think he could do without the drinks when his children are barefooted," the visitor said.

"Don't you ever take a drink? Come now," she bantered. "Do you think because he is so poor that he don't want a drink, too, just the same as you when he gets to feeling mean? He is a good man. He brings the most of his money to me when he makes it. He isn't like this man who lives in the alley near the dump. He has five children, too, but he drinks up all he makes and I tell you they suffer. My husband is a good man. He gets out of heart so that he can't eat. I call him down if he drinks too much, but poor man, I hate to do it. It's his only comfort."

She washed Herbert's face and changed his ragged waist for another one -- that was cleaner. This disclosed that Herbert, who is 3 years old, had on no underclothing -- nothing but the thin cotton waist.

"There isn't a one of the five that has a stitch of underclothes," Mrs. Tash said. "I haven't got them."

"You have underclothes, haven't you?"

"Me?" she says with a laugh. "I haven't had a stitch of underclothes for three years. But I'm used to it. My husband says I ought to have an undershirt because of the pain I have all the time in my chest. But I can make out. I'm strong, and I'm used to it. You know a person can get used to anything, and underclothes is a habit more'n anything else. But I do wish I had some for the babies. But maybe if they had underclothes, they wouldn't be as healthy as they are, and then we'd have doctor bills to pay and how would we pay them?"

She showed a letter she had received from Mrs. Clair Bruce, 60 North Ninth Street, Kansas City, Kans., asking her if she would give her one of her children to rear.

"I can't read, but, here, you read that letter. It says that she wants one of my babies, don't it? Well she won't get one of them."

She lifted Herbert to her lap and cuddled him. His face was clean now, and his bright eyes sparkled.

"I'm proud of them all," she said. "Did you ever see brighter and healthier children?"

It was a fact, they were as bright and as healthy as could be.

"There is just one thing I dread," she said. "I am afraid the officers will take one of them away from me. They do that, don't they, when families get so awful poor?"

There was fear in her face as she snuggled her baby boy to her.

"I keep them off the cold floor as well as I can, and I keep them indoors this cold weather, and even if we haven't much to eat, potatoes are good. I've heard them say that in Ireland they live on potatoes, and the Irish are the healthiest people in the world."

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. This family of poor children lives at 922 St. Paul street, Armourdale.

Rained Gifts In Sandtown.

(The Sequel)

The spirit of Thanksgiving spread throughout Sandtown today, and a dozen families and twenty children had more Thanksgiving cheer than they ever dreamed existed in the whole world.

It all began with the troubles of Mrs. Tash and her five little children, told of yesterday in The Star. They live in Sandtown -- that part of Armourdale lying near the railroad tracks and the river, south of Miami street and west of the Sulzberger & Sons' packing house. The houses there are mostly one-story frame cottages and that had been lifted from their foundations by the flood of 1903 and wrenched and twisted. The walls and floors are full of gaping cracks and the doors and windows all awry, for the winds of winter to carry cold and coughs and death to the children who live there.

And there are so many children, too. It is a peculiarity of the poor folk who live there that they have lots and lots of children, and most of them know what it is to be hungry and to shiver with the cold.

The story of Mrs. Tash and her five children touched the hearts and purses of at least a thousand persons. That many went to the Tash home today, and each one took something. It began at daylight. They came on foot, in buggies, in motor cars. If you stood in front of the Tash home at 9 o'clock this morning and looked up St. Paul street toward the street-car tracks, you saw something like a great picnic party coming down with baskets and bundles.

By 10 o'clock Mrs. Tash was swamped, literally swamped. The one bed in the front room was piled so high with clothing of all kinds that no more could be put on it. Little David had four overcoats at that hour, and they kept coming. He had never had an overcoat before, and he kept trying them on, one after the other.

Mrs. Tash, who had not worn a stitch of underclothing in three years, had a dozen suits now, and there were shoes and stockings and other clothing enough to last the family a year.

There were so many baskets of groceries and chickens that Mrs. Tash, after she had piled the kitchen table with all it would hold and stuffed the space under the table full, began to push them under the bed.

Long before noon the house had all it could hold, and the good woman told of another family, that of Mrs. Hogoboon, at 919 South Packard street, that was as badly off as she had been yesterday.

So across lots to Mrs. Hogoboon's went the crowd. They found her and her four children in the kitchen sitting around the stove. She had just finished skinning two rabbits, and they were ready to put on the stove for the Thanksgiving dinner.

"But," she said, "I don't believe I've got enough coal to cook them."

"Well, how much have you?" asked a woman whose motor car was around on the other street.

"There it is in the scuttle," said Mrs. Hogoboon. "I bought a dime's worth this morning."

And that was her last dime, too. Her husband was out on his express wagon trying to make enough to buy some more coal before the chill of evening came on. She said he felt very lucky when he earned as much as a dollar in one day.

Well, the food problem was soon solved for that family. The kitchen was half filled with baskets in no time. And the little girl kicked off the thin slippers she had worn all through this cold snap and covered her toes with a pair of warm shoes that just fitted her. While all that was going on a woman went over to the coal office and paid for a ton of coal to be dumped into their shed this very day.

Still the baskets kept coming. The yard was full of persons waiting to give things away.

"Where are some more folks that haven't any Thanksgiving dinner?" they clamored.

Mrs. Hogoboon told of a Mrs. Cogswell, a poor widow who works over the tubs. Away in her direction went the crowd, laughing and full of the Spirit of Thanksgiving.

It took some searching to find Mrs. Cogswell. Finally a boy pointed out the place, upstairs over an empty store with its front windows boarded up.

Up the rickety stairs went the men, women and children, their feet clattering loudly in the empty hallway. They pushed open the door, and there was Mrs. Cogswell over a washtub, her arms in the suds up to her elbows and her little girl turning the crank of the wringer.

"Mercy me! What's this?" the woman exclaimed as she straightened up.

In the little kitchen where she was washing there was scarcely room to get around behind the two tubs and the wringer and the basket of steaming clothing.

"Will you accept a Thanksgiving dinner?" a woman asked kindly as she stuck a big basket through the door.

"Well, the good Lord must have sent it," the poor washer-woman said as she leaned one hand on the edge of the tub and wiped soap suds into her eyes with the other.

"And here's another; there's turkey in it," said a little

girl who had come all the way with her mother from Mount Washington.

And there were more, and more, and more.

"What were you going to have for dinner, anyway?" a man asked.

"Why we were hurrying to get this washing done so we could have anything at all," she said.

"You don't mean to say you have nothing to eat in the house at all?" he demanded.

"Not a thing; we ate the last for breakfast, and it was pretty slim."

"Well, come on now, drop that washing and cook up a good dinner."

"I must get this washing out first. The folks have promised me the seventy-five cents if I bring it before noon."

"Here's a dollar; let 'em wait till tomorrow for the washing," the man said.

"And here's two more," another man said.

And they just made her sit down and begin to get that turkey ready for the stove. And then a good angel of a woman whisked the little girl away to Kansas avenue in her motor car and when she came back she had on new shoes and a new coat and a thick knitted Tam-o-

Shanter cap and a new dress and some warm stockings in a bundle. And as the little girl came up the stairs to her mother she was crying, and her mother, who had been a widow for ten years and in all that time had never had a dollar that didn't come out of the washtub, was weeping, too, as she caught the girl up in her arms and hugged her.

Plan A Christmas Wolf Drive.

R.R. Richardson, founder of the "Big Brothers'" Society, that did so much good last winter, got a new idea from reading the story of Mrs. Tash in the Star yesterday. He is going to organize one thousand persons into a club to help the poor this Christmas. Each of the thousand will give \$1, and that will create a fund of \$1000 with which to buy a Christmas dinner for all who cannot get it in any other way.

When Mr. Richardson read of the need of Mrs. Tash and her five children he sent an announcement to the Star, which was published this morning, That he would give something himself and would receive and send to Mrs. Tash all that others might leave at his office, 201 Scarritt Building.

At noon today he had collected \$29 in money and enough groceries and clothing to fill two wagons. He divided it all equally among Mrs. Tash, Mrs. Cogswell and Mrs. Hogoboon.

"Now," Mr. Richardson said, "I am convinced that the wolf has lifted the latch of many a home, and it is a pretty lean and hungry wolf, too. I want a thousand men to send me \$1 apiece and I will hire a good man for \$75 to work between now and Christmas searching out the deserving poor, and we will find out which need coal, and clothing and groceries, and just before Christmas we will buy the coal and groceries we need at the lowest wholesale price and deliver it." ¹

It was these stories that led to an investigation of the true living conditions of the poor in Kansas City. The "Big Brother Movement" was the result which was so successful that it became too large for newspaper scope, and is today directed through the United Charities.

1. Harrington, H. F., Typical Newspaper Stories, page 80:

"The story, 'The Wolf Lifts the Latch' and its sequel were not dashed off on the inspiration of the moment. Its author admits that he made a thorough investigation of the Tash home before he set

Still in another field did Mr. Nelson strive to serve each individual subscriber. The delivery of the paper was prompt -- whether the man who was paying the ten cents was in Kansas City or foreign lands. He ordered his circulation department to supply the demands or requests of the Star's customers, not because service brings more trade, but because he felt they had bought service when they paid ten cents a week for the paper. In 1913 the circulation department sent each day's copy of The Star on a cruise around the world -- in search of a certain subscriber that felt he could not do without his paper even though he be in the remotest corner of the earth.

a line on paper, and also that the story was published after it had been carefully revised six times."

A few weeks before sailing, Mr. Earnest Kellesstross informed Mr. August F. Seasted, circulating manager of the Star of his intention to leave on the U. S. S. "Cleveland" on February 6, 1918. The printed schedule of the Cleveland was sent to the Star of all ports at which the ship would dock. The length of sojourn at each place was listed. Special wrappers with eleven foreign addresses were printed and all issues of the Star sent the Kellesstross family at these ports. Some of the letters sent to the Star by these foreign readers shows the keen interest of all members of the family in the Star:

In one Mr. Kellesstross says:

"All through Japan, all through China, Batavia, Java, Singapore, Stuart Settlements, Rangoon, Bernia, Calcutta, Indian Columbo, ... we never missed a number of The Star. It is the most wonderful thing, how these papers reached us, but you can rest assured that they looked better than a letter from home, because we have all the news at all times."

The mere fact that the Kansas City Star reached these travellers at every point is not such a remarkable fact in itself. Other papers have reached foreign travellers, although I can find no instance where such detailed care has been taken of each copy so that the greatest efficiency in service might be rendered. But it is the sense of the "personal" element felt by the voyagers for the "Star" that is unique in itself. At almost every port of importance Mr. Kellesstross himself wrote a long letter of appreciation and of description of his travels to the "Gentlemen" of the Star. A newspaper that can keep in such personal touch, have such a realistic meaning for those whose time is constantly occupied with new impressions, must indeed be a real factor in the lives of those whom it seeks to serve. It must indeed serve as a companion, as a servant of the public comfort.

So it has always been in all the details of the Star's existence. "Do everything you can for every man" Mr. Nelson would

tell the Staff. And whether "everyman" was a group of citizens in Missouri or a starving population in Cuba, or whether it referred to an individual family which needed a Christmas dinner or a traveler who desired companionship, The Star has striven to fulfill its mission as a servant of The Public Comfort.

Chapter IV.

A Day With The Star.

As I stepped from the car at the corner of Grand Avenue and McGee Streets in Kansas City, a homelike building in dull red brick extending for a block before me, brought to mind the structures characteristic of Europe in the early period of the Renaissance.¹ The dignified yet artistic strength of the building

recalled the impression of quiet power I had felt when I viewed one of the city buildings of quaint old Salisbury. It seemed as quietly impressive in comparison to the great shops of Kansas City as did this English house of law in comparison to the gigantic magnificence of Salisbury Cathedral. But this was not a city building, it was merely the home of a newspaper. It was the building that allows the Star the honor of claiming the largest home in the newspaper world.

The quiet strength of the Star building seems to be only a material expression of all the ideas that characterize Mr. Nelson's desires for the Star. The architectural plan he adopted from the

¹ Parsons "Interior Decoration. Its Principle and Practice" Chap. II, p. 117. "The Early period was the expression of humanism in Greek form filtered through a gothic consciousness. The result was a dignified, strong, sincere, consistent return to nature and to the structural principles that governed the expression of a man's requirements. This period is wonderfully beautiful in its conception and material expression."

McLean home in Washington, D. C. He subjected his own plans to the famous architect, James Hunt of Chicago. A few months later Mr. Hunt presented in person "a magnificent water color painting of a palatial building in marble".¹ When Mr. Nelson entered the office where it was placed before the admiring gaze of the staff he said, in reply to Mr. Hunt's desire for an opinion, "Oh, it's a beautiful building, of course. But it wouldn't do for a print shop. You couldn't imagine a printer's devil all covered with ink coming running out of a marble palace."² He wished neither a typical work shop nor a miniature cathedral. He desired a home.

As I gazed at the immense proportions of this structure, pacing around the block to view it from all angles, I could scarcely believe that this was the home of a paper with a total circulation of 1,915,001 copies a week,³ which only thirty eight years ago printed its first issue of a few hundreds of sheets in a small dingy building at 407-409 Delaware Street. I recalled this was its fifth home. Each time the change had been necessitated by the cramped facilities caused by the increasing circulation. Mr. Nelson said that

1. The Editor and Publisher, New York. April 17, 1915, p. 926.

2. The Fourth Estate, William Rockhill Nelson Memorial Section. New York, Saturday, May 22, 1915, p. VI.

3a. William Rockhill Nelson, Chap. p. 52

b. The Fourth Estate (see n. 2.) p. VI

c.

3 Kansas City Star "A Years Progress With The Star" Feb. 1, 1918.

the object of the Star was to improve the city. "If the City grows, the paper must grow" he declared. "Work for the city always." If the increase in size of the paper does indeed indicate even to a small extent the increased social power of the paper no other argument is needed to prove its social force.

The interior of the Star's building is as typical of the general atmosphere of the Star as is the exterior. The editorial room is perhaps the most unique and famous part of the plant. It is a room one hundred and eight feet square. "It is not by multiplying rooms and offices that The Star has sought to solve the problems of convenience and expectation upon which the facility of modern newspaper publication depends. There is no labyrinth of passage ways to private apartments and walled-off sanctuaries to impress the visitor with the exclusiveness and formality of the organization. Rather has the purpose been to enlarge the spaces for combined and concentrated work, and to add the utility of the best equipment to the stimulation of work in common."¹

Just as Mr. Nelson sought to serve the readers through the

¹"About the Kansas City Star Office," published February 1, 1912.

paper, so he sought to aid the workers of the Star with the most perfect equipment. He realized the truth of the old saying. "As a man soweth so shall he reap", when applied to any line of business. Today we protect the soldier with all possible comforts not only because we love him but because we realize it is a military exigency. So Mr. Nelson spent years in devising the most scientifically perfect plan of workmanship for the newspaper office not only because he desired ^{to adopt} the most beneficial plan for all men in his employ, but because he desired to secure the maximum efficiency from each worker. It was merely another way of serving his beloved public, for success within the office insured a higher degree of efficiency without. After years of careful study he decided that the great open room, an office for every man on the staff was the most expedient means of securing the best results. The effect is remarkable to one who stands in the center of the room and looks from one corner of the one thousand nine hundred seventy four square feet to the other.

At one end of the room stands the desk of Mr. Nelson, unoccupied now, but decorated always by a framed photograph of its former occupant. Here one can imagine him sitting day after day,

always in full view of every one of the fifty men in the room. No man held too lowly a position on the Staff to consider the man at this desk his personal friend and advisor, no man was in the room who was not known to Mr. Nelson. "He was always there in full view of even the printers' devils, not as a dictator or editor in chief, but as a friend, -- a member of the Star family!"¹ And what was the personal appearance of this powerful editor and sincere friend who sat there among his employees as one of their number? Julien Street has given us a vivid picture of the impression Mr. Nelson made upon him. He says, "Colonel Nelson is a 'character.'" Even if he didn't own the "Star", even if he had not the mind he has, he would be a character, if only by virtue of his appearance. I have called him a volcano; he is more like one than any other man I have ever met. He is even shaped like one, being mountainous in his proportions and also in the way he tapers upwards from his vast waist to his snow capped peak. Furthermore his face is lined seamed and furrowed in extraordinary suggestion of those strange gnarled lava forms which adorn the slopes of Vesuvius. Even the

¹ Testimony of eighteen members of the Kansas City Star Staff who worked under Mr. Nelson. (see Bibliography)

voice which proceeds from the Colonel's "crater" is Vesuvian, is hoarse, deep, rumbling, strong. When he speaks great natural forces seem to stir, and you hope that an eruption may not occur while you are near, lest the fire from the mountain descent upon you and destroy you."¹

Yet the fifty men constantly passing before him in the room loved the "volcano" so vividly described by Julien Street, as is shown by the constant respect and regard that they pay his memory today. The area about his desk seems to be almost sacred. It is not exaggeration to say that whenever any member of the staff desires either approbation or aid in a period of indecision, he looks to this desk for inspiration. "What would Mr. Nelson do or have me do with this story?" seems to be a constant thought in the minds of all the men and the three women employed. An example of the manner in which the city editor, for example, seeks to follow the silent dictation of Mr. Nelson's spirit occurred while I was in the editorial room one day.

The coal situation in Kansas City in the winter of 1918 was hazardous. On January 30, it was eight degrees below zero. In

Kansas City when it is eight degrees below zero people seldom venture to face the cold. The Star for days had been clamoring for conservation of coal. It had aided Emerson Carey, the fuel administrator, in every manner possible. On the 29th of January it had said:

"While the people of Kansas face worse prospects from a coal famine than at any time this winter, few appear to realize the necessity for conserving the supply," declared the administrator today. "It is not only a matter of closing business establishments at specified hours, but that fuel must actually be saved in quantities. The alternative is untold suffering from cold by many people of the state, if the severe cold wave continues a few days."

A case of severe suffering was reported to Mr. Longdon on the morning of January 30. At this time there was a sufficient supply of coal in the city, but because of the extreme cold all draymen refused to deliver. A woman telephoned the Star office for aid. In her small home she had four children whom she was attempting without coal to keep from freezing. She had called

the fuel administrator, who had replied to her plea, "If you can get a dray and come after it we can sell you coal." How was she to get a dray, and how could she leave her four small children to secure the coal herself?

Mr. Longdon hung up the receiver and pulling another phone toward him called the fuel administrator.

"How is the fuel situation?" he queried.

"Fine, fine," was the reply. It was the optimistic answer of any city official questioned about matters which vitally concern the public welfare.

"You're a liar," was the retort. Then, in no half hearted way, Mr. Longdon laid out a plan of action.

He instructed the officials to use the public service drays, suggesting that all those employed by the city drop all other matters and attend only to the coal situation. He added "Tell the Mayor we said this." He threatened Star publicity if they did not relieve the situation immediately.

As he finished talking with the administrator, he called the Star reporter stationed at the City Hall and ordered him to go to the Mayor and demand that the coal situation be relieved. Within twenty minutes the Mayor called the city editor and announced

that he considered it a splendid idea. Within an hour the four children were being warmed by coal. In the issue of the Times the next morning which reported the success in relieving the famine the day before, no mention was made of the "Star". No one but those in the office who chanced to hear the conversation realized that four children, at least, might have frozen had not Mr. Langdon with his powerful weapon of publicity dictated the actions of the public officials.

"It is what I think Mr. Nelson would have desired" was the only explanation he offered.

If the desk of Mr. Nelson can influence so potently the actions of those working in their common office, how much more powerful must have been his personal influence. All were in plain view before him. In a direct line before this desk and in the center of the room stands the great square desk of the city editor. Here is the man who is indeed the center of all that goes on in the office ^{and controls all that goes} ~~into the~~ newspaper itself. He has at his right hand phones that connect him with all parts of the Star and with the City. And around him in plain sight are the report-

ers and assistants who are the connecting links between him and the printed sheet.

To the right of Mr. Nelson's desk, in the southwest corner of the room, is the art department. Seven men are occupied here drawing the cuts which appear in the five daily issues. For years Mr. Nelson refused to print "cuts" in the Star because he felt that they gave inadequate and often false representations to the public. He felt it was better to give people no pictures, than poor ones. "One of Mr. Nelson's hobbies was a clear, good page. And a half tone cut does not give that, Mr. Nelson would say," declared Mr. Wood, head of the art department. But neither was Mr. Nelson satisfied, not to give to his public as much as other papers were giving. He realized the psychological effect of a picture. So he determined to print pictures, but to print pictures that would represent truly the originals. He employed artists who would draw by hand the scenes that other papers secured by photography,

"These long hand drawings are not perfect," Mr. Wood said. "Expression is a very fleeting thing and hard to draw. But an artist gives the picture a human touch that no photographer can give. That is what Mr. Nelson desired, the human touch."

The human touch! Mr. Wood is not the only worker in the office who feels that the 'human touch' was an integral part of the aims of Mr. Nelson for his paper. A few feet from the city

editor's desk is the typewriter belonging to the special feature writer for the Star. Mrs. Tad Powell runs it now, as she did for the last few years of Mr. Nelson's life.

"I should say the most striking thing about the Star" she said, "is the -- the human grab. It is always doing something for somebody. Like one of Whistler's pictures it is permeated with an atmosphere of quiet power. Here the quiet power is what I call the "human grab."

In the corner of the room directly opposite Mr. Nelson's desk lies the 'literary' department. Although placed so far from him it was one of Mr. Nelson's favorite departments. Twelve men are busy here daily clipping the best articles from magazines, the best passages from books, the most beautiful poems. If they are worthy of the thousands of readers, they are reprinted in the Kansas City Star. "If a poem by Rudyard Kipling, or a story by S. G. Blythe was the most interesting thing that came into the office in a day, Mr. Nelson said "play it up" on the first page."¹

Mr. Kreegar, the literary editor, explains more fully Mr. Nelson's ideas in establishing this department. "He never con-

1. W. R. Nelson, p. 121

sidered news a sufficient excuse for printing an article. He wanted interest as well. Through this department he hoped to inspire people to read good articles and good books. We use very little syndicate material. What we aim to do is to give the best out of the news as a guide. Anyone who reads what we print may be tempted to get the whole article or the book."

But whether the readers secure the entire article or read only the part printed in the Star, they will have read the very best in literature. There is no one who has the time to read all magazines or all books. There are twelve men occupied daily, clipping the best for all of the citizens of Kansas City. . What they cut is not news, it is literature. It does not sell the paper, but it educates the public.

Let us take a typical issue of the Times and note the clippings for one day.¹ Following are the titles of some of these:

"New Nannie and Seventy" from Blackwood Magazine.

"Good Breeding", Chesterfield.

"A scholar without good breeding is a pedant; the philocopher, a cynic, the soldier a brute, and every man disagreeable."

1. December 4, 1908

"Miss Padeford to Make Debut" N.Y. Press.

"Romance of The Modern Knight

"Thus the romance of the religious of the past is doomed to give way to the romance of the prosperity of the present.

"Activity Among the Oddities" from Rudyard Kipling's "Mellissa" in Colliers.

"Children In Switzerland" from the Housekeeper for December.

"Apartment House Life" New York Herald.

In the Kansas City Star for Tuesday, April 17, 1914, we have the following selection:

"America's war against Death" George Hawley in North American Review.

"Liberty and Efficiency" Charles. W. Eliot in the Atlantic Monthly.

"Without presentment " from the Pathfinder.

"The Turk Longs To Rule Over The Lands Of Egypt", Philip Catzefils in the Philadelphia Ledger

"Many Colonial Troops Fighting in Europe" Statement
by National Geographical Society.

"What is Culture" Champ Clark in the North American
Review.

"About The Range of Cannon" Percival A. Heslain in the
London Globe.

"Gratitude" from The London Standard.

"In Fairyland" a poem by Alice E. Allen in the Youth's
Companion.

The beliefs and views of any editor are most powerfully
shown through his editorial page. Mr. Nelson, himself, rarely wrote
anything for the paper. Immediately to the right of Mr. Nelson's
the desk of
desk is A Mr. H. J. Haskell. For twenty years he has had charge of
the editorial writings of the paper. He has written the ideas which
Mr. Nelson expressed to him.

"The editorial and news policy of the Star are one," he
said. In reviewing the files of the paper we do indeed find this to
be true. The policy of both is to give constructive accounts not
only of the events of each day, but to serve the general object of
the paper by cooperating in aiding any campaigns devised or undertaken
editors
by the editor. Many of the news stories of the Star are what news

of other papers would call the "editorial." If the aim is to "serve" in any way they are considered news to the Star. To realize fully the unity of purpose of news story and editorial it is necessary to review the various campaigns.

From the early days of its existence The Star has fought long term franchises. It has been beaten in practically every case. The Metropolitan corporation which operates the street car system of Kansas City secured in 1914 a thirty year contract in spite of the continued opposition of the Star. It is characteristic of the Star that they did not give up the fight even after the granting of this franchise.

The campaign which Mr. Nelson carried on in behalf of the jitneys he used to a double purpose, -- as a means of establishing cheap transportation and as another method of fighting for short contracts. In doing this he had printed every few days spirited editorials and constructive news stories. The same day that he published the editorial quoted on page 32, the large front page story told of the use of the jitney to be made at Swope Park Picnic.

"The small jitney car drivers have not agreed on what they will charge. They are disposed to stand at the curb and negotiate their own deals with their customers, permitting competition to establish the rate for the service.

"That's one of the advantages of competition on free and open streets. Nobody has a monopoly on motor travel. As many may enter the game as choose and the patrons enjoy the privilege of standing at the curb and dickering with the head of the firm on what is a fair charge and a fair profit. The street cars in the rush hours can make the trip in about forty-five minutes. The jitneys can make it in about half the time and still observe all the rules of traffic which insure safety." ...

Mr. Haskell said, "because the parties change programs" there is a political line up, a ring of corrupt leaders. At one election, they back the democratic party, at another the republican, so they may keep continual control. The Star is always against the line up. In National politics they change as to desire. In 1908 they exerted every effort to elect Mr. Taft, in 1912, to put him out. Examples of the combined news and editorial policy of the Star were shown in the campaign of 1912.

At this time a man by the name of Cowhead was running for mayor of Kansas City against a Mr. Hadley. The star was supporting Mr. Hadley. On October 29, there appeared both stories and editorials to prove the corruptness of one and the comparative honesty of the other. The editorial is a notable one.

"The politician of the old school has been a familiar figure in the United States. He seeks office for purely personal reasons without any notion of the trusteeship involved. The maxim that to the victor belongs the spoils he accepts in the broadest sense. The spoils include not merely the office, but franchises, special legislation, and other favors to the people who put up the money for his election expenses. He knows that you can't run campaigns without money, he understands the power of human and the public service corporation and, of course, he isn't so foolish as to want to touch them. Besides, what is a man elected for, if he isn't to be good to his friends.?"

"But a new type of politician has appeared in recent years who doesn't regard public offices as worthwhile if it cannot be used for public well fare. Unless it comes to him honestly and

without spoils, he won't accept it. He can't be induced to appoint rascals or incompetents to office merely because they happen to be party workers. The square deal is a hobby of his and he has a terrible aversion to special privileges.

"It is hardly necessary to specify which of these two types the Star has always fought. They are here defined and contrasted merely to point out to its never readers the precise and only reason for its attitude in the present campaign."

"I could talk forever on the policies of the Star and the ideas of Mr. Nelson,. Mr. Haskell said, "But it may be summed up with what I have already written." The following editorial was written by the man who was one of Mr. Nelson's nearest associates for twenty years. It appeared in April 1915.

Mr. Nelson, Editor.

Mr. Nelson was primarily a great editor. His methods in the conduct of The Star were as individual as everything else he did. His interest extended to the smallest details. But particularly in his later years he paid little attention to the business aspects of the newspaper. His attention was absorbed in editorial duties.

It was characteristic of him that he asked that when it was necessary to mention him in the news columns he should be referred to

as "Editor" of The Star, rather than as "Editor and Owner" -- the title which was kept standing at the head of the editorial column.

He almost never wrote anything for the paper with his own hand. He was too busy for that. But the day rarely passed when he did not outline one or more articles of some sort. Almost always in these outlined articles, there would be striking sentences which could be used verbatim. He was a master of epigrammatic English.

If he were away from the office for any reason he would jot down memoranda of ideas on the backs of envelopes. Later he would have them copied on sheets of paper and sent to some member of the staff for circulation. One night in his illness, for instance, he was wakeful. About midnight he called Ben, his devoted friend, nurse and manager of the household, and dictated these paragraphs. They are characteristic of him:

The legislature has always been looked upon by the capitalist as a place to obtain special privileges. It looks now as though the people may go there to get their rights.

The public is always generous. Isn't it about time to say to the plutocrats that you must be satisfied with your rights? We

ask you to accept no less than your rights and we insist that you should have no more.

The suggestion that public streets can be used by good men and women on which to make a living is rank anarchy. City streets thus far have been regarded as belonging exclusively to the rich on which to issue stocks and bonds. Granting that only one thousand jitneys will be necessary to take care of the business in Kansas City, what a splendid thing it will be to give independent occupation to that number of good men and good women!

What do you think of a jitney column for contributors?

The jitney will interest every good man, woman and child ingood roads."

When he was away at Magnolia for the summer he always liked to have a member of the Staff with him. ...

On such occasions he sent daily letters and telegrams to the office, making suggestions and giving hints of policies. For instance, in 1911, Champ Clark made a speech replying to a statement by the President. Mr. Nelson wired "While Champ Clark's reply lacks dignity in spots, he scored all right."

At another time, he wrote, "Our attention should be given to tax reform at home. A citizen ought to be able to pay all his

county and city taxes at one time. There is too much duplication of officials and duties."

He was fond of sending such precepts as this:

"In every editorial room the warning sign of the New England railroad crossing should be posted: 'Stop, Look, Listen' A good head is a mighty thing, but unless guided by a good conscience it can do a world of mischief in a newspaper office."

Several years ago he issued a letter addressed to The Star's staff. Several passages are so typical of the views he was always emphasizing as to deserve question:

"The loss of a local election has never been a matter of very serious concern to The Star, which consistently is occupied with greater things than filing offices and is concerned in election results only as they accelerate or retard their more important purpose. ...

"In the permanent things, both great and small, with which The Star is engaged, every one having a part in its production should have a hand. Every one should clearly understand those purposes and have them constantly in mind, so that no news or information or influence bearing upon any of them shall be overlooked or designated. Every reporter, every writer, every desk man should regard each of these subjects as a continuous assignment in which the best

interest of the paper is concerned. And in general, every one should strive to furnish ideas and suggestions, to find new opportunities for the paper's active service; new features of interest, new ways of doing things.

Just as Mr. Haskell could talk for hours on the policies of the Star, so could one write many volumes. At his death, Mr. Nelson left all of his property, even to the Star itself, to the City, just as he had dedicated himself and his paper to the city's service while he lived. From 1880 until 1915, he spent no day that he did not serve to the maximum of his ability the city he loved. The result is one of the most beautiful of cities, and most powerful of newspapers.

"If therefore, you should ask what is William Rockhill Nelson's monument, we should answer 'Kansas City.' Not indeed, the Kansas City of packing houses, machinery depots, rich department stores; these come with geographical location and population. The Kansas City Mr. Nelson lived for was the ideal, the spiritual Kansas City,

the Kansas City of beautiful streets, the Kansas City of a happy, thrifty, well-governed, well educated, self respecting people.

"To this end he created a paper to read, which was itself almost a liberal education. Morning and evening, every day, he sent through the homes of the city a morning paper and an evening paper which never appeared that it did not bring columns, if not pages, of real literature, real education, not dry-as-dust stuff in mummy cloths that stank of death, but materialized, modernized, luminous, twice a day a lesson in liberal culture of all points of life!"¹

1. The Central Christian Advocate.

Conclusion.

"There are forty different ways of making a successful newspaper," declares Mr. Hearst. In his "yellow journalism" he has given to the world one type of the 'successful' paper.

"I have a great hope of disturbing the public peace in various directions," is the motto Arthur Brisbane has adopted from Ruskin for his Hearst editorials. In one of these editorials he explains what Ruskin meant by this statement. "This was his way of saying that he hoped to stir up dissatisfaction, to provoke irritation, impatience, and a determination to do better among the unfortunate. He did good because he awoke thought in thousands of others. Editorial writers," Mr. Brisbane adds, "don't you know that stirring up dissatisfaction is the greatest work you can do?"¹

Just as Arthur Brisbane here construes the meaning of Ruskin's disbelief in self-satisfaction to suit his own sensational aims, so Hearst considers all the events of life as sign boards to attract the human emotions. By continually displaying the sign boards in red letters, Mr. Hearst "stirs up dissatisfaction" in such

1. "Editorials from Hearst Newspapers" (By Arthur Brisbane) p.136

"To Editorial writers -- Adopt Ruskin's main idea."

a successful manner that his papers give a striking example of one of the "forty" different types of a successful newspaper.

There are numerous men who have achieved even greater success than Mr. Hearst in that journalistic world. James Gordon Bennett, Horace Greeley and Henry Jarvis Raymond have few equals in newspaper fame. They founded papers that were not only successes within themselves but which were dominant forces in the moulding of journalistic progress. .

In 1835 James Gordon Bennett introduced The Herald in New York City. Altho it had within that city fifteen daily competitors, within a year it was the leading journal. This was because it brought to the mass of people "something new". It brought news -- news of everything for everybody. For the first time Wall street found its financial transactions made known to all who paid one cent for the Herald. Foreign news now became a vital part of the knowledge of the average reader. Scandal and church news found themselves printed side by side. No "sacred cows" housed in Bennetts' fields. He even attacked the Church, regardless of denomination. He wrote the first newspaper accounts of the annual meetings of various religious organizations, much to the annoyance of both pulpit and pew. He reported

the proceedings of the police court with a freedom which even enlarged the time honored freedom of the press. In relating scandal with full particulars that filled columns of his paper, he seemed to think the more he shocked the people, the more they would read his paper. If he was assaulted either in the street or in his office, he gave a full report of it the next morning under the standing head "Bennett Thrashed Again."¹

Prior to this period newspapers has been influential organs -- primarily in politics. But, following the lead of the New York Sun in issuing a penny press, Mr. Bennett established a journal that was not only a power in politics but was a sensational social influence as well. At the end of the first year in reviewing the accomplishments of the Herald he summarizes very clearly his purpose.

"It is my passion, my delight, my thought by day and my dream by night to conduct the Herald, and to show the world and posterity, that a newspaper can be made the greatest, most fascinating, most powerful organ of civilization that genius ever dreamed of. The dull, ignorant, miserable, barbarian papers around me, are incapable of arousing moral sensibilities, or pointing out fresh patterns for the intellectual career of an energetic generation."

1. Maverick, Raymond and New York Journalism. p. 35.

Bennett is accused of being vulgar and extremely sensational. But it was his "vulgarity" and "sensationalism" that gave to the newspaper world the challenge for competition which was to lay the way for Horace Greeley and Henry Jarvis Raymond. "He shocked the propriety of the time by introducing the rivalries of the spirit of enterprise which have since been distinguishing characteristics of New York newspaper life."¹ One of the first great rivalries was The Tribune with its all powerful leader Horace Greeley.

In "The Log Cabin" a few days before the first issue of the Tribune on May 17, 1845, Mr. Greeley announced "The Tribune will labor to advance the interests of the people, and to promote their moral, social and political well-being. The immoral and degrading police reports, advertisements, and other matter which have been allowed to disgrace the columns of our leading penny papers, will be carefully excluded from this; and no exertion spared to render it worthy of the hearty approval of the virtuous and refined, and a welcome visitant at the family fireside."

Here is expressed more distinctly a true social aim than in any other newspaper prior to this time. And he conscientiously

can

1 Lee, James Melvin. History of American Journalism, p. 197.

strove to fulfill his aim. He was the friend of all progressive aid for the poor, woman's rights, the building of a transcontinental railway, the emancipation of labor, the anti slavery cause, and many more reforms, which found support in the columns of The Tribune. Politically, he was one of the greatest powers of the country. He did more than any other man to elect President Lincoln. But before the expiration of the Presidential term, because he had not been sufficiently informed of the regulation of affairs by the administration in Washington, he took sides against the President. Just as he fluctuated from one side to the other here, so did he change his view point in other matters. He had as his ideal a great newspaper of potential influence which should act as a social service organ for the people, not only of New York, but of the United States. But he never accomplished the ideal. He believed that the newspaper should be independent of politics, free to choose its own views, but in his constant change of view he lost a large part of the influence of the paper. He believed in social service, but in attempting to establish the free and equal laws of socialism as he did in 1840-44 he became impractical. People lost faith in him and in the Tribune.

Yet the Tribune was most certainly one of the most successful of any possible "forty" types. "We have a number of requests" Mr. Greeley declared during the early days of the Tribune, "to blow up all sorts of abuses, which will be attended to as fast as possible." From first to last he was "blowing up" abuses, and from first to last he was serving, in his way, the public. But at most it was a political, and at the best, a changeable way. His service to the journalistic world and the social world was immense, but it was of a fluctuating nature. George Ripley has said that the foundations of the Tribune were originally laid in ideas and sentiments. The ideas and (sentiments were always present, the practical results frequently lacking. It was the indefiniteness of these ideas, the variation of the results combined with the, at times, notorious fame of the paper that aided Henry Jarvis Raymond in finding grounds for the founding of "The Times" just as Bennett's sensationalism had aided Greeley.

In its first issue, September 18, 1851, the Times, stated clearly its object.

"The Times will present daily:

"The news of the day, in all departments and from all quarters. ...

"In its political and social discussions the Times will seek to be conservative in such a way as shall best promote needful Reforms.

"It's main reliance for improvement, personal, social, political will be upon Christianity and Republicanism.

"All the news that's fit to print" is the time honored motto of the Times. It found its origin expressed in a sentence of Raymond's: "The world needs discretion as much as zeal." Upon this idea, as expressed in this sentence he built the New York Times. "He knew the political and journalistic situation thoroughly; he had the acumen to see what kind of paper was wanted, and he aimed deliberately and skillfully to fill or at least occupy the wide gap between Greeley, the moralist, the reformer, and Bennett, the cynical, non-moral, ~~freelance~~ ."1

The Times was conservative as it is conservative today. It has always been successful. It was admittedly a party machine at its foundation.. But this, combined with its conservatism and its use of "All The News That's Fit To Print" marks it as another high in the list of forty great but different newspapers.

1. Dr. F. W. Scott, Life of Henry Jarvis Raymond, p. 13

(not printed)

The Herald with its sensationalism, the Tribune with its energetic reformatory methods, the Times with its balanced news columns, all have been among the leading papers which might be named of the forty greatest. Numerous other editors have risen to country wide fame through the adoption of other methods. The revision of the Eastern ideas of journalism to accommodate the desires of the frontier citizens of Chicago as accomplished by Medill, the influence of the gold rush upon papers of the Pacific coast, the religious inspiration of the Christian Science Monitor, might all be cited as original and successful means of establishing a daily journal. Wherein this great list shall we place the great daily we have just reviewed? What position in the journalistic world shall ^{we} ascribe to The Kansas City Star?

The object of the Kansas City Star as stated in the first issue has already been quoted:

"Kansas City is the commercial center of the Great Missouri Valley, and no city in the country contains within itself greater possibilities or offers brighter prospects for the future. No city in the land is growing more rapidly or attracting more attention in all quarters. ... Having great confidence in the future of the City, The Evening Star enters the field without a doubt that it will achieve

unqualified success and in a very short time become one of the recognized institutions of Kansas City.

"... The Evening Star will labor with special zeal and earnestness in behalf of all measures tending to advance the interests of Kansas City and develop the resources of the Great Missouri Valley."

The Herald with its sensationalism, The Tribune with its notorious reformatory methods, The Times with its conservative, well-balanced news columns all have been successful newspapers.

There are numerous other editors who have made country wide or state wide names for themselves and their sheets ^{made} successful by other methods. The revising of the eastern ideas of Horace Greeley to journalistic codes to fit the western Chicago populace by Joseph Medill, the influence of the rush for gold upon the newspapers of California, the religious inspiration of The Christian Science Monitor; all these and many more might be cited as examples of successful newspapers. Where in this number shall we place the Kansas City Star? Which shall we consider the one "ideal" newspaper?

The object of the Kansas City Star, as we have already stated, was the creating of a successful city. As a result Mr. Nelson gradually became the editor of the greatest newspaper of the world of today.

Emma Ridgway gives the following definition: "The Ideal newspaper is a composite of the individualities of its readers. Because it is like you, you like it. You associate with the people that like what you like. All papers have the same news to work on. Your paper presents, plays up the news, as you would if you were writing the paper."

The reviews of numerous newspapers would undoubtedly bear out this statement to some extent. If we want news, "all that's fit to print" we read the Times, if we desire to be shocked, we read one or two of Mr. Hearst's journals. . If we are Republicans or Progressives, we read the Chicago Tribune. But is the newspaper that is like us really the ideal? Should we have our ideals no higher than ourselves? It is not good for the sentimentalist to read too much of Dickens, for there he finds his own faults glorified. But Dickens has a great moral message for the

1. Ridgway, Emma. The Fourth Estate May 22, 1915.

materialist since he offers a compliment for the materialistic temperament. How far would the world progress if we associated with only those like us, read only such books and papers that appealed to us?

The Kansas City Star is like one person only. In its columns lives the character and personality of its editor, William Rockhill Nelson. Just as he sought to serve to the best of his ability all those about him from his own printers devils to the poorest man of the city he loved, so does the Kansas City Star seek to serve all whom it can reach.

"Service" is one of the watchwords of the day. Is not the paper which serves all people impartially and truthfully regardless of its own material success the "ideal" rather than the one which appeals to characteristics common to certain types of individuals?

The old criticism that there can be no truthful, no "ideal" newspaper, the often repeated sentiment that newspapers by their very nature must be partisan and sensational can never again stand unchallenged. For today, there are two arguments which cannot be refuted which pronounce the newspaper not only a bulletin of daily proceedings, not only an educational institution and a power

for social reform; but which establishes it forever, as a possible social force, equal in power to other social influence in the progress of civilization. These two proofs are Kansas City and The Kansas City Star.

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Mrs. F. Moffet, woman's editor

Mr. August F. Seestead, Circulation manager

Mr. Woods, art editor

Mrs. Tad Powell, special feature writer

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